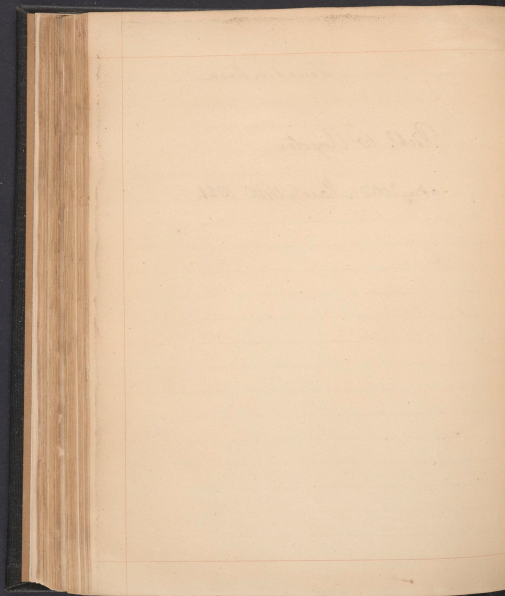


*Leuchon haca*

*Rich? W. Rogers*

*admitted March 14th 1821.*

*Rich? W. Rogers*



## Leucorrhoea or Fluor albus.

To this disease various definitions have been assigned according to the opinions entertained by different authors as respects the origin and nature of the discharge. In a healthy state, the vagina is kept moist by a secretion from the Lacunae of this canal; and to this secretion is added a secretion from the cervix Uteri, and the serous exhalations from the lining membrane of the Uterine cavity. Naturally the balance between secretion and absorption is such, that except on particular occasions, there is no discharge from the vagina externally, but in a diseased state the secretion preponderates, and there issues from the vagina a mucous or seriform discharge which has received the name of Leucorrhoea, Fluor Albus or Whites. Some have supposed this discharge to be secreted by the menstrual vessels alone, others that it sometimes comes from the Uterus but most frequently from the vagina. And some suppose that both the Uterus and the

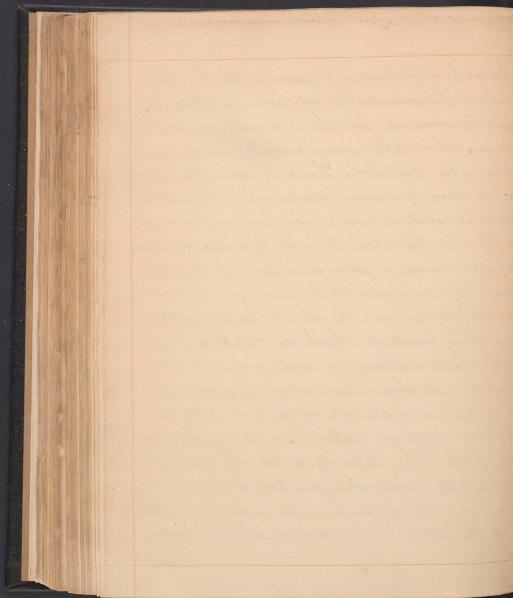




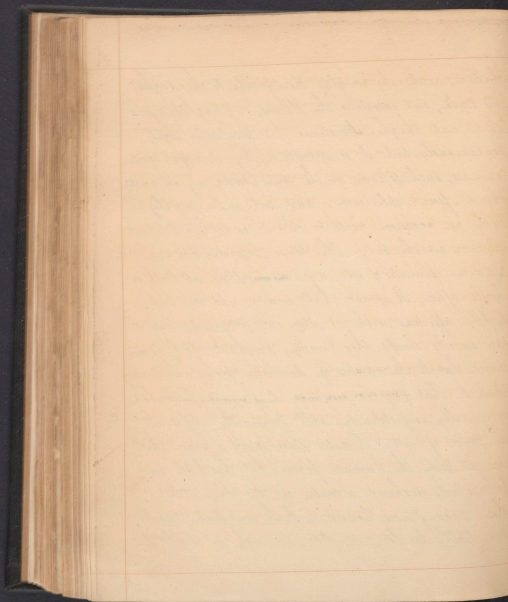
Vagina aid in producing it. Gullen, treats of it as  
 a flow from the same vessels which in their natural  
 state pour out the menses, and calls it a serous dis-  
 charge. Gullen must now prove that this serous  
 discharge as he calls it, is the same as the serum  
 of the blood, before we can admit that this discharge  
 comes from the Uterus alone. If we are to judge  
 from the sensible properties of the matter, and the  
 changes both of colour and consistence which it undergoes,  
 we should pronounce it to be the same as that from  
 any diseased mucous membrane, and not a serous  
 discharge. Moreover if it proceeds from the Uterus,  
 why is it that women when they become impregnated  
 instead of having the discharge diminished which  
 ought to be the case have it augmented. Gullen's Hypothesis  
 carries no kind of probability along with it. It certainly  
 implies that the Leucorrhoea is nothing more than the  
 depraved menstrual discharge, but this is very impos-  
 sible. Can we suppose that the menstrual discharge  
 ever assumes the form of pus? Now we know that the



Leucorrhoeal discharge frequently does. That this discharge does some times proceed from the Uterus is generally conceded, but this is of rare occurrence. Causes, Fluor Albus may occur in two very different states of the constitution. These states are a state of plethora or disposition to vascular activity, and a state of debility. The one is marked by a full habit, good complexion, and a clear healthy skin. The other by a pale countenance, a sallow surface, a feeble pulse, and generally a spare habit. The one is attended with vertigo or disease produced by fullness; the other by dyspepsia, palpitation, and those complaints which are connected with debility. The discharge is much more abundant in some than in others, is more copious in summer than in winter, and is also more copious a day or two before the menses begin their flow, than during the rest of the interval between the periods of their appearance. But the quantity is influenced by the passions of the mind and every thing that in the least affects the state of the body. When the disease is far advanced, it becomes sanious

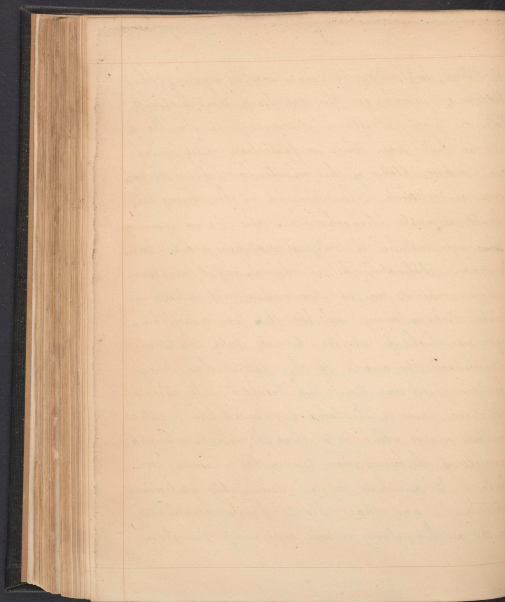


ichorous, acrid shockingly disagreeable to the sight and smell, and excoriates the Uterus, vagina, labia pudendi and thighs. Sometimes this discharge stops spontaneously, but it is succeeded by dreadful consequences, such as pain in the Hypogastric region and Head, fever, delirium, and not unfrequently on such an occasion acute or chronic exanthemata break out over all the body. This disease is said to have affected females of every age, and infants at birth or shortly after. It appears that women who are but slightly affected with it when not pregnant, have it more severely should they become pregnant. It has as been observed that all the varieties of duration, from a momentary attack to that of years or even more has occurred. Leucorrhoea is generally very obstinate and frequently defies all the powers of art. Causes There is not a power that can debilitate the human frame, but has been and perhaps truly reckoned a cause of this complaint. Those circumstances however which contribute most immediately to its production, are such as debilitate



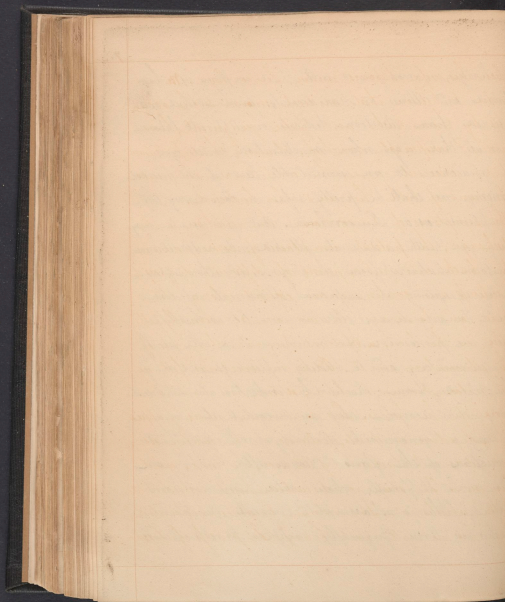
the Uterus itself, viz. by various exciting causes, such as  
 abortion, menorrhagia, frequent parturition, difficult  
<sup>labour</sup> or fatigue after a miscarriage or a delivery  
 at the full time. And in fact any thing which  
 can induce atony of the membranes investing the va-  
 -gina and Uterus. When produced by these causes we  
 should term it Idiopathic. But this disease is some-  
 -times symptomatic of Polypus, prolapsus, or cancer uteri.  
 To draw a distinction between this dreadful disease  
 and one more disgraceful (Gonorrhoea) is certainly a  
 difficult task in many cases, but there are certain cir-  
 -cumstances which if attended to, will enable us to determine  
 with tolerable precision. If the patient has been  
 declining for some time, been troubled with stomach  
 affections, pains in the loins, &c; has not been regular X  
 in her menses, either as to quantity, duration or regu-  
 -larity; if the menses have been either preceded or  
 followed for some time by an unusually great serous  
 discharge, and there has to these symptoms suc-  
 -ceeded a thin, glairy or even more or less puriform





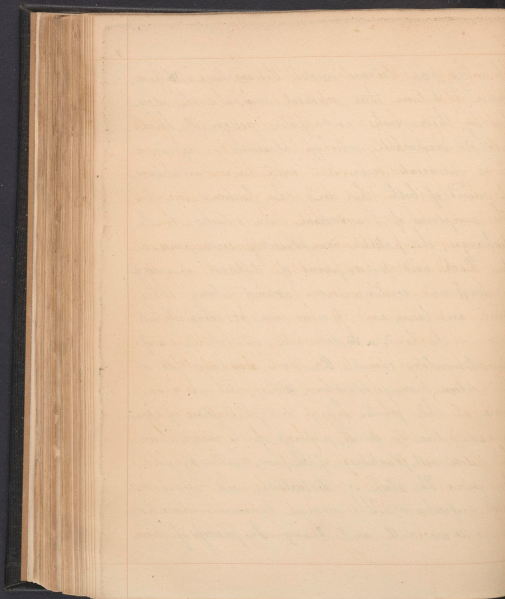


discharge, unaccompanied with heat or pain in the bladder and Uterus or their canals; if the patient has suffered from abortion, tedious or difficult labours, or is at that age when menstruation must cease in obedience to an immutable law of the animal economy, we shall be pretty safe in considering the complaint as a *Leucorrhoea*. But if a woman enjoying good health, is suddenly attacked with an odoriferous, puriform discharge from the vagina, and other inflammatory symptoms, the suspicion of venereal infection would be very strong; still however let us hesitate before we pronounce, for we may stain the purity of innocence, and to bodily sufferings add one of the mind, from which the unfortunate individual may never recover. Cases are recorded of men having a gonorrhoeal discharge with or without excoriation of the glans penis, after having coition with a female whose virtue has never been doubted. This is not a complete venereal infection, for this we learn frequently happens to a husband



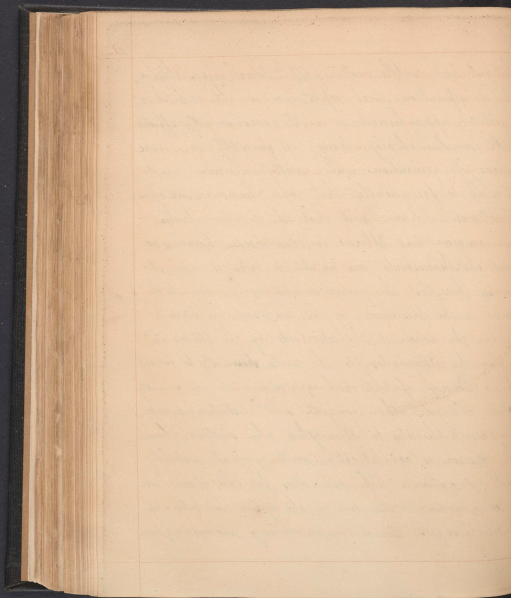
when his wife labours under Leucorrhoea, we have reason to believe that medical men on such occasions by their rash and false judgment, have produced irreparable mischief, blasting the reputation of an innocent wife, the confidence and peace of mind of both her and her husband.

The symptoms of Leucorrhoea. In addition to the discharge, the patient complains of severe pain in the back and pubis, pains of different degrees of acuteness and continuance extend along the spine and loins, and pains are occasionally felt also in the head, in the stomach, and other parts of the alimentary canal. Pains are sometimes felt in the spleen, kidneys, bladder, uterus, and more or more of the joints. Loss of strength, failure of appetite, dejection of spirits, paleness of the countenance, attended with flushing of the face, chilliness, and languor. The sleep is disturbed, and affords but little refreshment. The woman becomes emaciated, her eyes are dull and heavy. In process of time



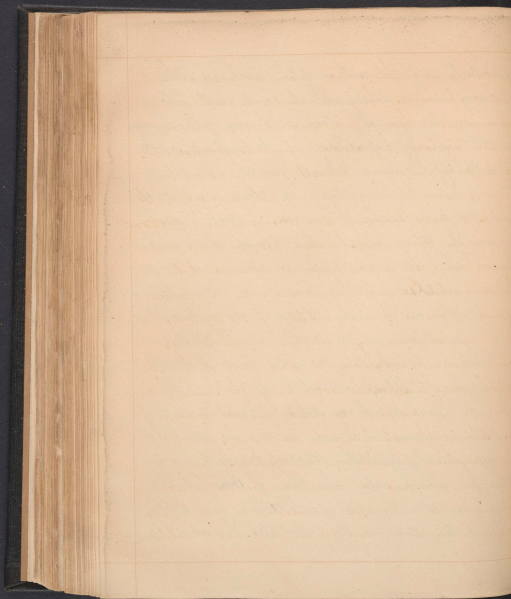
the feet and ankles swell, palpitations and a difficulty of respiration are experienced, the mind is dejected, apprehensive, and occasionally affected with melancholy. Very frequently the functions of generation are greatly injured and sterility is frequently the consequence thereof.

Treatment. I have said that the secretion from the vagina and Uterus in this disease becomes so great that absorbents are unable to take it up. It seems then, that the proper indications of care to be observed in the treatment of this complaint, are first to increase the action of the absorbents of the Uterus and vagina, by restoring tone to the parts, secondly to correct the acrimony of the discharge, diminish its quantity and allviate other urgent and distressing symptoms; and thirdly to strengthen the system, when the disease is complicated with general debility and relaxation. The remedies for this disease are varied according to the tone of the system and colour of the discharge. Hence in prescribing always inquire



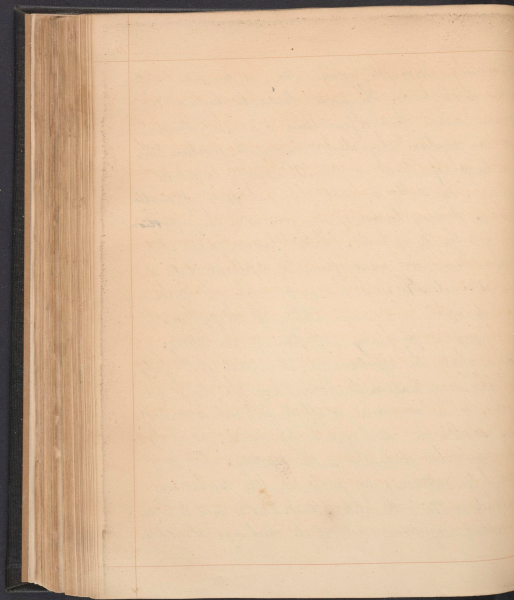
particularly into the nature of the discharge. This may vary from a starchy white to green; but before assuming the greenish colour, it becomes yellow according to the intensity of the colour of the discharge, so is the intensity of the disease. It was formerly thought that in proportion to the intensity of colour, was the malignancy, &c. But exactly the reverse of this obtains. The increase of colour marks in cases of action in the vessels. In the treatment of this disease, we should ascertain whether it be symptomatic of Polypus, prolapsus or Cancer. If it be not, we have then to attend to the general state of the constitution. Should the patient be plethoric or robust, it is necessary in the first instance to diminish the fulness and activity of the vessels by mild, and perhaps of a diet by moderate doses of laxative Medicines, and more if requisite the Blood. As we generally find the digestive organs in a morbid state, we should restore the tone of them, which will also restore the tone of the Uterus, and thereby increase the action of the absorbents. This we do by







by giving astringents, either alone or combined with some of the bitters. The parts should be bathed in warm water three or four times a day, and should we use injections they should be of the sedative kind, as sugar of Lead in water. This should be not too strong, ℥ij to ℔ij of water will perhaps be sufficiently strong. It may however be stronger, as in the proportion of ℥ij to the ℔ij of water. Cullen however denies that Leucorrhœa ever arises from a depressed state of the stomach. He says that except when the disease depends upon a general debility of the system, it is always a primary affection of the Uterus: and that the affections of other parts of the body which may happen to accompany the disease are rather to be considered as effects and not as causes of it. Should the discharge be less intense, we may increase the strength of the injection. When it is yellow for instance, we may use the saccharum Saturni joined with white vitriol. This is said to be an excellent injection: and if the discharge should be



of astarchy while, the injection may be stronger and more astringent. But should this disease occur in a weak habit, or if the plethoric state, though it existed at one time has been removed, the internal remedia should be more directly tonic, and injections of various astringents should be employed, such as those mentioned, solution of Alumine & decoction of oak bark - Of the internal remedia some are intended to act by Sympathy on the secretion of parts, as Emetics; others as general Tonics & Emetics are thought by some to be highly serviceable, not only on account of their action on the stomach & alimentary canal and thereby causing a revulsion of the Humours from the inferior part of the body, but likewise by exciting all the powers of the constitution to a more vigorous action. Purgers have also been used to carry off noxious matter and for that purpose are useful, but for no other; as brisk purging has been found to be injurious. Tonic Medicines and those which improve the



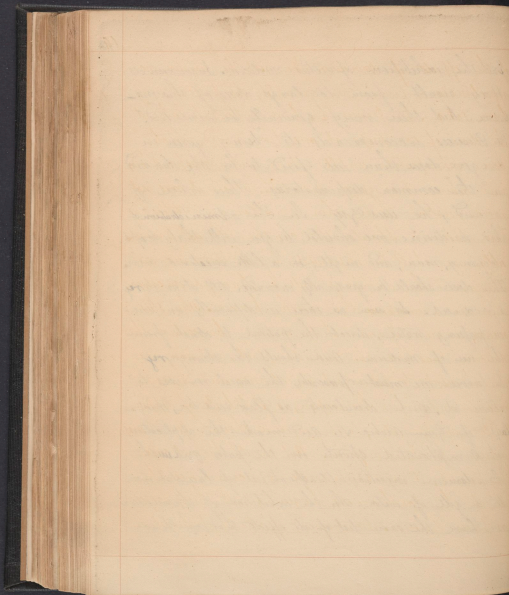
action of the chylipoietic viscera, such as Leme-  
nator, myrrh, bark, stool, Rhubarb, Nux. vom, are  
of great utility, and along with them we will  
find the cold bath of great advantage.

Various medicines have been proposed with a  
view of acting specifically on the secreting  
parts. of these, I think the Tincture of Can-  
tharides from the report of Dr. Robertson promise  
to do more than any of them. Dr. Sewer of this  
city who has carried the use of Cantharides  
to a greater extent & respect, than any other phy-  
sician of the city, says he thinks it one of  
the most certain remedies yet discovered for  
the cure of Leucorrhoea. This is not a remedy  
lately introduced into practice. Dr. Greenfield about  
100 years ago used it with great advantage.  
But Mrs. Robertson is entitled to the credit of having  
reintroduced it into practice. Having had an op-  
portunity of learning Dr. Sewer's mode of exhibiting  
it, I will adopt it. Some little caution is necessary in



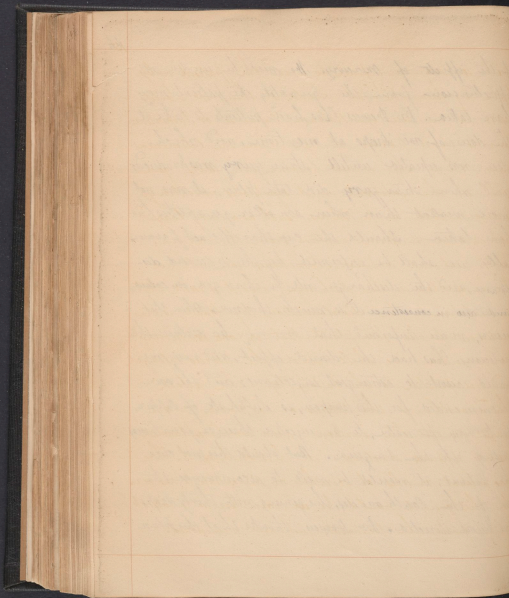
in the exhibition of this medicine. Inconveniences may result from too large doses of this medicine, but these may generally be remedied. Dr Quercus recommends its being given in larger doses than we find to be the standard in the common dispensatories. Thus where  $\text{Zij}$  is used, he uses  $\text{Zijj}$ . In the administration of this medicine, we should begin with thirty drops morning, noon, and night, in a little sweetened water. The dose should be gradually increased, till strangury is produced. So soon as there is difficulty and pain in passing water, direct the patient to desist from the use of medicine. And should the strangury be severe we must prescribe the usual remedies to relieve it, such demulcents as flax seed tea, Mucilage of Gum Arabic &c. and make the application of Camphorated spirits over the pubis and use the Laudanum injection (teaspoonful of Laudanum to a gill of water). In the exhibition of this medicine we have the same test of its effects that we have



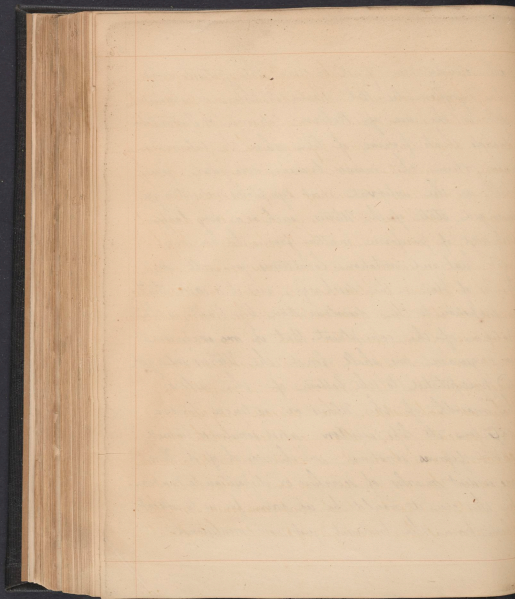




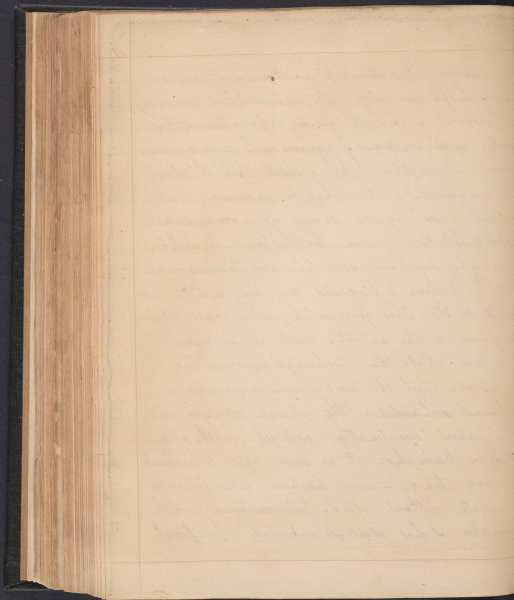
of the effects of Mercury. We need be under no apprehensions from the quantity the patient may have taken. Dr Lewis has had patients to take it in the dose of 100 drops at one time, and which dose was repeated untill strangury was produced; and when strangury did take place it was not more violent than when smaller quantities had been taken. Should the cantharides act favourably, we shall be informed by the increased discharge, and the discharge will be changed in colour, and also in consistence it is much thinner. When this occurs, we are informed that we may be certain the medicine has had the desired effect, and now we should resort to astringent injections; and the one recommended for this purpose, is Sulphate of Copper, ℥ss to ʒssj of water, to be injected three or four times a day up the Vagina. But should this not cure the patient; it would be well to recommence the use of the Cantharides, beginning with thirty drops as before directed. Dr Lewis thinks that this plan



will scarcely ever fail to cure the patient unless it be symptomatic. But should it then, we should resort to the use of Balsam Copaiva or Turpentine. Towards that period of life when the Catamenia ceases, when the menses become irregular, you will in the interval meet symptoms indicating a deranged state of the Uterus, such as a very large discharge of puriform matter from the vagina, great heat and irritation. Sometimes you will see streaks of blood in the discharge, and it is said that in proportion to the discolouration by blood, is the violence of the complaint. But if we examine per vaginam, we shall find the Uterus enlarged and precipitated to the bottom of the pelvis; the mouth of the Uterus or os tinea more patulous, its lips swollen and sometimes turned out & fissured sometimes in the mouth of it. There are evident marks of scirrhous or disposition to cancer. In this case it would be in vain for us to expect relief from the treatment just now mentioned.



But from the Hemlock and ~~Fowler's~~ solution we may hope for relief. In administering the Hemlock we should begin with giving 15grs of the extract daily; opds containing 3 grains each & given morning, noon, and night. After a short time it may be augmented till vertigo be induced. And as an auxillary we may give 8 or 10 drops of Fowler's solution. The parts should be kept clean by injections, and the one recommended for this purpose is flax seed tea and a little nitre added to it. This gives relief to the more distressing symptoms of the patient. But it sometimes happens that the discharge becomes so excessive that the woman is suddenly almost exhausted. The disease progresses and the patient eventually expires with open cancer. Camphor it is said affords as much as any thing; opium has been given largely by itself without effect, but combined with Camphor it has displayed decidedly beneficial



effects. The disease is seldom removed but by artificial means, and when these are long deferred it proceeds to waste the constitution with accumulating mischief. In fatal cases of the disease all the symptoms are highly aggravated, and hectic fever with its delirious train, and dropsy in every form supervene and terminate a miserable existence.



